Interpellation.

Mr. John Nidiry.

19. In view of "the rapidly increasing political consciousness among the people of this State which is so full of promise, intellect and progressive ideas",

(*a*) do not the Government think that the time has come for conceding larger shares of administrative responsibilities to the people of Travancore?

(*b*) are not the Government aware of the repeated demand that is being made by the people through the platform and the press for some substantial reforms in their representative bodies like the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly and the Legislative Council on the lines adopted in British India and in some of the progressive Native States?

(*c*) are the Government aware that there is a widespread feeling that the existing Sri Mulam Popular Assembly should be constituted on a statutory basis with larger powers and wider representation by the reduction of the tax qualification from Rs. 50 to Rs. 10?

(*d*) have the Government bestowed sufficient attention on the advisability and necessity of establishing an Executive Council, with a people's representative in it, if possible, so as to command public support and confidence in all administrative measures?

(*e*) do the Government propose to take any steps to satisfy any of these just and timely demands of the people?

20. (*a*) Will the Government be pleased to state whether they have considered the advisability of extending the Railway from Kottarakara to Alwaye, especially in view of the large and growing revenue which the Railway has begun to yield after the opening of the Quilon-Trivandrum extension through inhabited areas for traffic from 1st January 1918?

(*b*) Are the Government aware that there is a serious complaint among the people in North Travancore that they are not benefited by the Railway Line already opened in the State through impenetrable mountains and forests?

(*c*) Do not the Government feel that the time has far advanced for undertaking the construction of the proposed Kottarakara-Alwaye Railway Line in view of

(1) popular demand;

(2) the proposed opening of the Cochin Harbour in the near future;

(3) the assured profit that may accrue to the State and the incomparable benefits to the people;

Answer.

Chief Secretary Mr. N. Rajarata Rao.

19 (*a*) to (*e*). The Government are aware of the existence of the various opinions referred to by the Member. The question relates to three institutions:—The Sri Mulam Popular Assembly, the Legislative Council and an Executive Council.

Sri Mulam Popular Assembly:—Government propose, after the next session of the Assembly is over, to take in hand the revision of the rules regarding it.

Legislative Council:—This was reconstituted only a year ago on the recommendation of the late Dewan, Dewan Bahadur M. Krishnan Nair. It has to be assumed that the provisions of the Regulation reflect the considered opinion of the Government formed only a year ago as to the extent and kind of powers with which the Legislative Council could be invested. The Government consider that the Regulation should be given a fair trial before it is taken up for revision.

Executive Council:—The proposal to constitute an Executive Council does not, at present, commend itself to Government.

20. (*a*) to (*c*). Government cannot accept the correctness of many of the statements contained in the question. But the matter of Railway extension is engaging their attention.

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